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SUBJECT: JORDAN: Public Diplomacy Engagement Furthers Cairo Speech Goals

REF: A) Amman 2487, B) Amman 1676

¶1. This cable is the second of four cables following up on the October visit to Amman of NSC Senior Director for Global Engagement Pradeep Ramamurthy. It outlines aspects of Embassy Amman's efforts to advance goals emphasized in the President's June 4 speech in Cairo.

¶2. Summary: Public Diplomacy efforts reinforce the President's message of mutual respect and partnership, targeting diverse audiences through a variety of initiatives and tools. Our engagement focuses specifically on education and exchanges, interfaith partnerships, youth engagement, women's empowerment, and support for key sectors such as entrepreneurship, science and technology, and global health. End summary.

Education and Exchanges

¶3. Recognizing that education and exchange programs play a vital role in fostering intercultural understanding and developing human capital for growth and progress, Embassy Amman has amplified its efforts in this area. Specific initiatives for the 2009-2010 year include:

--Hundreds of Jordanian students and teachers benefiting from in-country training through the English Micro-scholarship ACCESS program and other regional English-language exchange programs.

--One hundred Ministry of Education schools receiving translated titles of American children's literature and Jordanian youth engaging in reading activities through the Arabic Book Program.

--Twenty-three high school students attending schools in the U.S. for a full or half academic year through the Youth Exchange and Study (YES) program.

--Thirty-seven young Jordanians participating in citizen exchange programs, including sports diplomacy programs in the U.S.; and three young writers and an adult screenwriter participating in the creative writing program at the University of Iowa.

--A range of outreach activities publicizing educational opportunities in the U.S. through presentations at youth events and university fairs, as well as educational advising through our partner organization, AMIDEAST.

--Twenty-two university students honing English language skills through the NEA Intensive English Language Program.

--One of the largest Fulbright exchange programs in the region for students and scholars, with 34 Jordanians and 46 Americans participating.

--Forty-six Jordanian professionals from diverse fields participating in International Visitor Leadership Programs (IVLPs)

to the United States. Themes of the programs included school administration, countering extremist ideology, renewable energy sources, interfaith dialogue, and the role of legislators.

--Eighteen Jordanian teachers benefiting from intensive training and job-shadowing in U.S. schools under the International Leadership in Education (ILEP), the Teaching Excellence and Achievement (TEA), and the Fulbright Administrator Hosting Exchange programs.

--Approximately 3,000 Jordanians of diverse ages and professional backgrounds taking English classes at the American Language Center, including about 40 receiving scholarships through Embassy funding.

Interfaith Dialogue

¶4. In line with the President's call to engage further with the Muslim world in partnerships and mutual respect, several Public Diplomacy programs are aimed at exposing Muslim leaders in Jordan to U.S. values and opportunities for interfaith dialogue, including:

--Two International Visitor single-country programs under the theme, "The Role of Religion in the U.S.," for Sharia Islamic law students in March 2009 and for imams in October 2009. (A third similar program is planned for female Islamic leaders in March 2010.)

--In cooperation with the Institute of International Education (IIE) and the Ibrahim Family Foundation (IFF), the launch of a new initiative to provide U.S. undergraduate students of different faiths with the opportunity to participate in a 10-day study tour in Abu Dhabi, Jordan, and Israel during June 2009.

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--The visit of Georgetown Imam Yahya Hendi to Jordan in July-August 2009, including discussions with Muslim leaders and scholars on interfaith issues and on President Obama's Cairo address on outreach to the Muslim world. This program also included extensive media engagement, notably a one-hour live interview on the Islamist Fact International Jordan radio station.

--A DVC with Mohammad Abu Nimer, author of the title "Nonviolence and Peace Building in Islam," translated by the Arabic Book Program, for an audience of Jordanian university Sharia students.

Youth Engagement

¶5. Embassy outreach continues to focus on youth, particularly through exchange programs, sports diplomacy, speaker programs, and performing arts programs. Highlights of these activities include:

--Support for four local projects targeting youth groups at schools, universities, and youth activists in civil society organizations through the local grants program under the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI).

--Several youth-focused events, including a youth karaoke party at the Ambassador's residence during Ramadan, and several workshops and community service events organized through the MEPI alumni coordination office.

--Through the Arabic Book Program, donations of books for civic education, English language study, and the U.S. Constitution, as well as participation of Jordanian youth in creative writing workshops at the International Writing Program at the University of Iowa.

--A park rehabilitation and community service project, in which the Embassy partnered with the Municipality of Amman to clean up a park in an underserved area. Post is planning to donate playground equipment and engage in youth activities at the park in December.

--A youth alumni conference planned for February 2010 focused on leadership and networking.

--Numerous performing arts groups performing and conducting workshops with youth throughout the country, particularly in underserved areas. The Boston Children's Chorus, for example, performed before an enthusiastic crowd of more than 1,000 fans during our first outreach event in Karak. The Apple Hill Chamber Players also performed for 900 youth in the south of Jordan.

--Engagement with youth through new tools and technology, such as Facebook, Twitter, and text messaging, to spread information on U.S. programs.

Women's Empowerment

¶6. Embassy Amman has continued to place great importance on women's empowerment programs through Public Diplomacy programs, including:

-- IVLPs focused specifically on women, such as the "Women Leadership in Local Governments" program in September-October 2009, and the "Women as Political Leaders" program in October-November ¶2009.

--The MEPI local grant "Turning Civic Education into Civic Activism," which trained 90 women of the Badia region on civic engagement, as well as a range of activities through the MEPI-supported projects "Women in Technology" and the Middle East North Africa (MENA) Business Women's Network for women's economic empowerment.

--A series of Embassy-organized DVCs on the occasion of Women's International Day in April 2009, targeting 60 women activists, government officials, professors, and lawyers.

--Participation of a Jordanian woman entrepreneur in the State Department/Fortune's Most Powerful Women mentoring program during summer 2009.

--A \$25,000 grant for the "Women2Women" conference in June 2009, focusing on volunteer and networking opportunities for girls and young women.

---Through the Arabic Book Program, translation of the title "Feminist Theory: A Reader" to be used as a textbook by the Jordanian Women's Studies Center, Social Studies faculties at universities, and women NGOs across the Middle East region.

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Key Sectors for Growth

¶7. The President's call to develop entrepreneurship, science and technology, and global health initiatives dovetails with many of our existing and planned Public Diplomacy activities, including:

--IVLPs on "Renewable Energy," "Parks, Biodiversity and Eco-Tourism Management," "Environmental Protection and Biodiversity," "Food Safety and Public Health," and "Agricultural Trade and Food Security."

--Another MEPI local grant currently in its beginning stages to expand training for a micro fund for women through the Queen Rania Center for Entrepreneurship.

Proposed Expansion of Programs

¶8. In addition to ongoing and planned PD activities, Post looks for opportunities to expand and advance Cairo initiatives. For upcoming programming in 2010-2011, we are planning to develop a single-country IVLP on climate change and another on new media, as well as a possible Voluntary Visitor program on women's advancement and activism. With additional funding and resources, the Public Affairs Section at Embassy Amman could use its expertise to develop more exchanges and outreach programs tailored to fit Cairo themes. For example, new single-country IVLPs could target promising young

leaders for training in new technology and entrepreneurship. Such programs would tap into the critical youth population and the growing S&T sector and strengthen entrepreneurship to drive progress in Jordan.

BEECROFT